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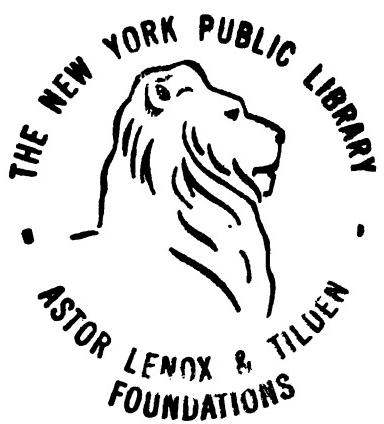
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# THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

BY

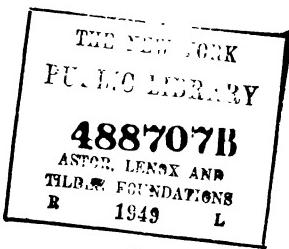
ELEANOR WOOD WHITMAN

Author of

*"The Story of the Prophets of Israel," and  
"The Life and Ministry of  
Paul the Apostle"*



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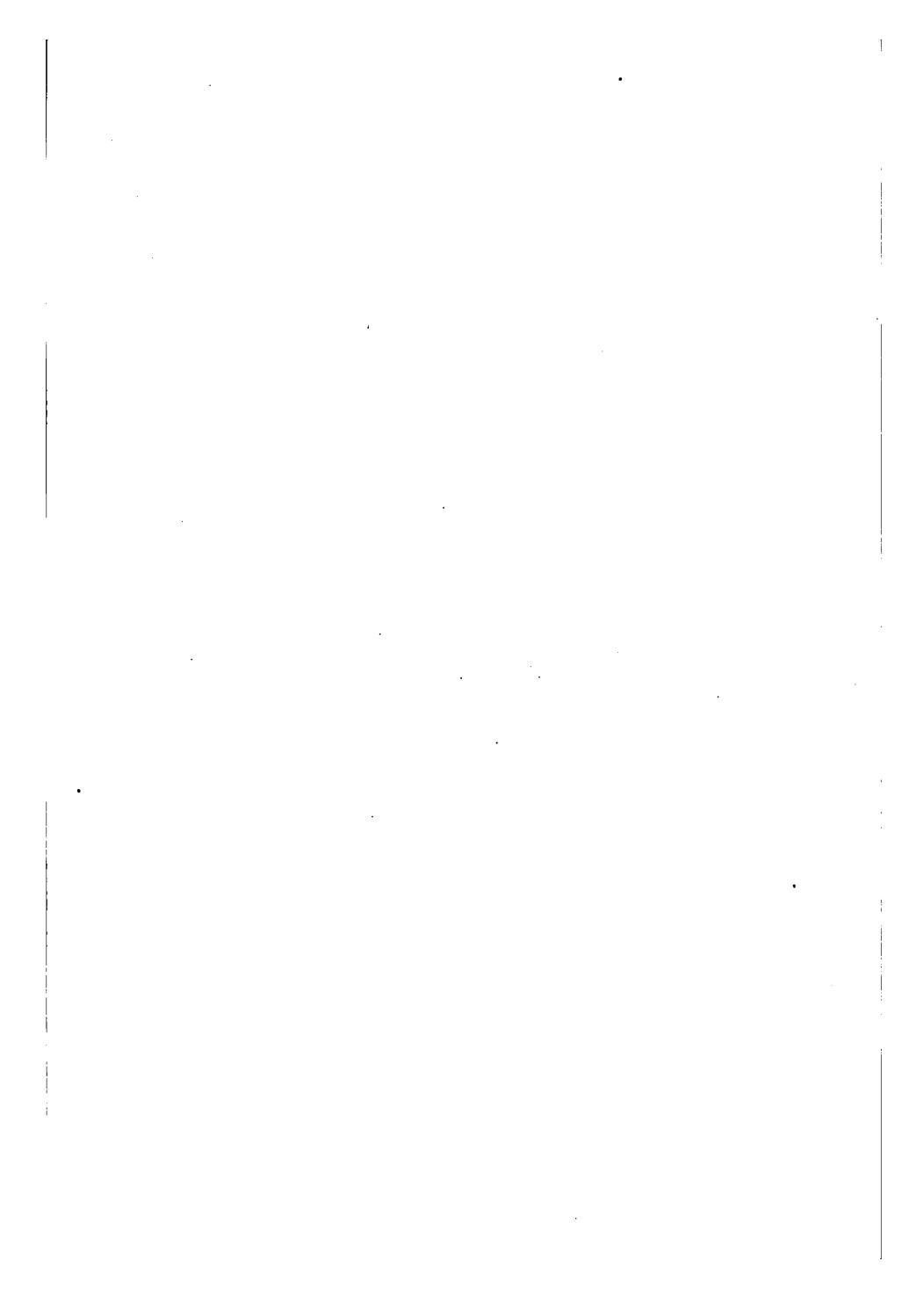
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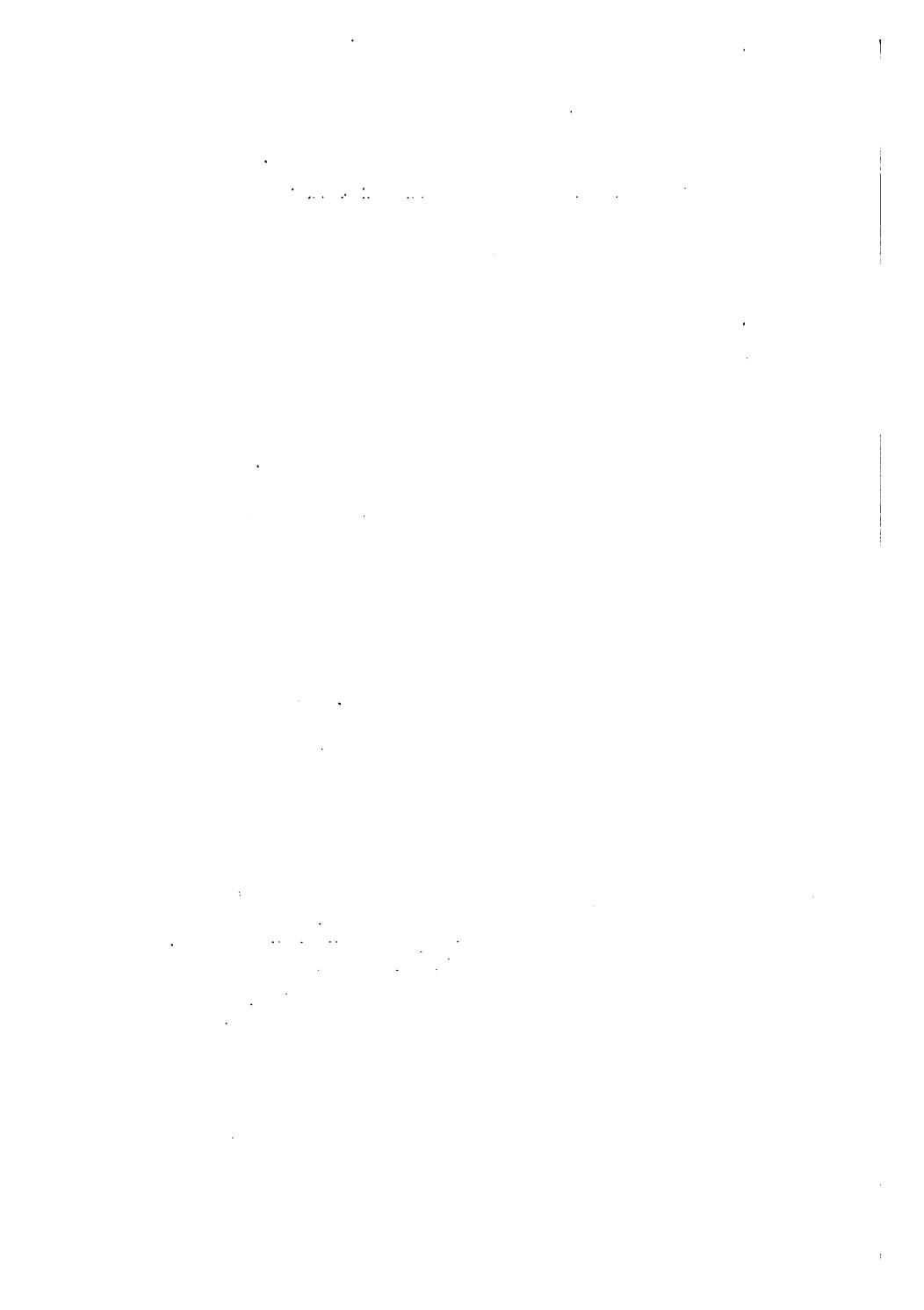
TO

**John Pratt Whitman**

TO WHOSE INSPIRATION AND  
COOPERATION THIS  
DRAMA IS DUE



## **THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH**



## **SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY**

**ACT I.** In the Days of Uzziah the King.  
Jerusalem Prosperous and Full of Injustice.

**SCENE 1.** In front of Solomon's temple.  
Celebration of a feast of Yahweh.

**SCENE 2.** Worship at the temple. Isaiah  
called to be a Prophet.

**SCENE 3.** Market-place of Jerusalem.  
Isaiah a preaching bard.

**ACT II.** In the Days of King Ahaz. Jeru-  
salem Attacked by Israel and Damascus.

**SCENE 1.** By the spring of Shiloah. Isaiah  
warns the king against applying to As-  
syria for help.

**SCENE 2.** In the market-place. Isaiah wins  
a few disciples to his Holy Remnant.

**ACT III.** In the Days of King Hezekiah.  
Jerusalem Threatened by Assyria.

**SCENE 1.** Street of Jerusalem. Isaiah is  
a sign against applying to Egypt for help.

**SCENE 2.** Hezekiah's throne-room. Coun-  
cil and king reject Isaiah's plea for faith.

**SCENE 3.** Hezekiah's Palace. The king,  
sick in body and soul, at last repents.

**SCENE 4.** The Assyrians appear before the  
walls of Jerusalem. The city is delivered  
and purified.

CELESTIAL CHORUS—*Major*

*Andante cantabile*

M. D. GRIFFIN

A musical score for 'CELESTIAL CHORUS—Major' in 2/2 time. The key signature is C major. The vocal line consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with a dynamic of *p*, followed by *cresc*. The lyrics are: 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, Yah - weh of'. The second staff begins with a dynamic of *f*, followed by *mf*. The lyrics are: 'Hosts! Ho - ly, ho - ly,'. The third staff begins with a dynamic of *pp*, followed by *p*. The lyrics are: 'Yah - weh of Hosts, and the whole world is full of thy glo - ry, Ho - ly,'. The fourth staff begins with a dynamic of *cresc*, followed by *f*. The lyrics are: 'ho - ly, Yah - weh of Hosts.'

DANCE—ANITATA

FROM THE SYRIAN

*Vivace Marcato la Melodia ed Accell*

A musical score for 'DANCE—ANITATA' in 4/8 time. The key signature is A major. The vocal line consists of three staves of music. The lyrics are: 'A - ni - ta - ta, A - ni - ta - ta as - mar - a - boo ha - ta - ta, A - ni - ta - ta, A - ni - ta - ta, A - ni - ta - ta as - mar - a - boo, ha - ta - ta.'

### CELESTIAL CHORUS—Minor

*Adagio*

*pp*

M. D. GRIFFIN

*mf*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, Yah - weh of  
Hosts! Ho - ly, ho - ly,  
Yah - weh of hosts, and the whole world is  
full of thy glo - ry, Ho - ly,  
ho - ly, Yah - weh of Hosts.

### MOURNING SONG

FROM THE SYRIAN

A - - - A - - - A - - - A - - -

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**KING AHAZ**  
**KING HEZEKIAH**  
**ISAIAH, the Prophet**  
**SHEAR YASHUB, Isaiah's Son**  
**SHEBNA, the Treasurer**  
**ELIAKIM, the Steward**  
**JOAH, the Recorder**  
**ZECHARIAH, a Councilor**  
**ABNER, Attendant of the King**  
**URIAH, the Priest**  
**RABSHAKEH, the Assyrian**  
**OBADIAH, a Temple Servant**  
**JONATHAN, Isaiah's Disciple**  
**DAVID, Isaiah's Disciple**  
**SAMUEL, Isaiah's Disciple**  
**TWO FARMERS**  
**WINE MERCHANT**  
**MESSENGER OF EKRON**  
**JOSHUA, a Messenger**  
**JOASH, a Messenger**  
**KING PADI OF EKRON, SOLDIERS,**  
**BAZAAR-KEEPERS, MONEY-**  
**CHANGER, FRUIT-SELLER,**  
**Egyptian, FAKIR, MOURN-**  
**ERS, SELLER OF LAMBS**

**SHELAH**, the Prophetess  
**ZILLAH**, Leader of the Dancers  
**REBECCA**  
**RACHEL**  
**JUDITH**  
**JONATHAN'S MOTHER**  
**CELESTIAL CHORUS**



# THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH<sup>1</sup>

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## ACT I—SCENE 1

*(Before the curtain rises, the beating of the Syrian drum, called "durbache," is heard, and as the curtain goes up the outside of the temple together with the steps and columns of the temple porch are visible. Near the steps a money-changer is sitting cross-legged at his low table. Walking about is a seller of fruit with a basket on her head. OBADIAH, an old man, is preparing the feast of figs and Syrian round flat bread. A group of gaily dressed young people laugh and talk while they wait for the music for the dance. A musician is seen coming.)*

JUDITH

Where is the musician?

SAMUEL

Oh, here he comes.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAAH

DAVID

(*To the musician*)

Hasten! The feast time passes.

SAMUEL

Soon the evening sacrifice must be offered.

<sup>3</sup> (*ZILLAH runs across and leads in the musician, who carries an "aout" or mandolin, and seats him beside the durbache player. While they are preparing to play the young people talk together.*)

JONATHAN

Have you heard that Isaiah refused to dance at the feast in Bethel?

ALL

No, surely not.

JONATHAN

Yes, I was there and saw him suddenly rise up like that old prophet, Amos, and say, "The garments which you have spread out beside your altars were taken in pledge from the poor."

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

SHELAH

What more did he say?

JONATHAN

He told them to remember the words of Amos—

(*Quotes with astonishment*)

“I hate, I despise your feasts,  
I will not smell in your festivals.  
Take away from me the noise of your songs,  
And the melody of your lyres;  
And let Justice roll as waters,  
And Righteousness as an overflowing stream.”

(*The crowd laugh incredulously.*)

SAMUEL

Oh, these prophets are mad!

SHELAH

(*To SAMUEL indignantly*)

Only the wise should condemn them. Let Justice roll as waters—(*looking at JONATHAN*). But Isaiah is not a prophet. Might he become one?

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### JONATHAN

I wonder if Yahweh might call Isaiah to be a prophet. I wonder if he will come to the feast today.

### SAMUEL

We will trust Shelah to draw him into the dance.

(*ZILLAH points her finger and all look and laugh at SHELAH, who turns and hides her face in confusion.*)

(*Enter WINE MERCHANT calling out his wares.*)

### WINE MERCHANT

Here is wine, new wine,  
The gleanings of the grape  
When the vintage is done.

(*A girl runs up and buys a drink, taking a coin from her girdle.*)

Drink wine with a song,  
Dance with joy unceasing.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

(*A boy drinks and runs away without paying. OBADIAH comes and fills a jar for the feast he is preparing. He offers a coin; the WINE MERCHANT examines it and shouts*)

It is not enough. Will you rob the poor?

### OBADIAH

This is the feast of Yahweh. You give wine to Yahweh. Now, begone!

(*The crowd drive off the WINE MERCHANT, who turns and shakes his fist at them.*)

### WINE MERCHANT

Yahweh will punish you; Yahweh will avenge the poor.

(*The dance music begins and the group dance the Syrian "Debke." ISAIAH, young and richly dressed, enters, reading a roll. Several dancers hold out their hands, inviting him to join them.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

Are you joyful, O people of Jerusalem?  
Have not the words of Amos, the prophet,  
come to your ears? Not music but mercy does  
Yahweh desire.

(*ISAIAH walks away reading the roll of Amos. The dancers begin the feast. Some buy figs, olives, etc., from the seller of fruit, getting their money changed by the money-changer. JONATHAN approaches ISAIAH, SHELAH following him.*)

### JONATHAN

Come, join in the feast of Yahweh.

### SHELAH

Rejoice with the children of Yahweh.

(*ISAIAH looks at them a moment and then turns away, reading from the roll of Amos.*)

### ISAIAH

Let Justice roll as waters, and Righteousness as an overflowing stream.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

(*SHELAH steps back with JONATHAN but keeps her eyes on ISAIAH and says the words under her breath with him.*)

### OBADIAH

Why dost thou reject the customs of thy fathers? They worshiped Yahweh with the cithera and with the dance.

### ISAIAH

Because you sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. Wine wrung from the poor you drink at your feasts.

### SELLER OF LAMBS

(*Carrying lamb in arms, calls out repeatedly*)

Lambs for the evening sacrifice!

(*ZILLAH and JUDITH go away, talking gaily. SHELAH talks to the WINE MERCHANT and gives him food. ISAIAH, repulsing the man who tries to sell him a lamb, ascends two of the temple steps and, turning, reads from the roll.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?

Though you offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them.

I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins; ye that afflict the just, and take a bribe.

Therefore thus saith Yahweh: "Wailing shall be in all the broad streets; they shall say, 'Alas! alas!' they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful in lamentation to wailing. And in all vineyards shall be wailing; for I will pass through the midst of thee," saith Yahweh.

*(The sound of a funeral dirge is heard in the distance. All listen eagerly. A company of mourners enters.)*

### LEADER OF MOURNERS

At the ninth hour King Uzziah, the Righteous, died. At sunset the tombs of the kings will receive him to sleep with his fathers.

*(The people prostrate themselves in sorrow. ISAIAH rends his garment and, coming down the steps, joins the others, putting dust on his head.)*

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

O God, thou hast forsaken thy people, the house of Jacob, because they are unjust; because their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.

(*The women dancers come back, laughing gaily; ISAIAH stops them with uplifted hand.*)

Uzziah the king is dead. (*Looking at the women who, though frightened, show no signs of reverence.*) Thou hast forsaken thy people, because the daughters of Zion are haughty. (*The women make their way through the crowd while ISAIAH follows them with his eyes and continues*) You walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as you go, and making a tinkling with your feet. Behold, Yahweh shall take away the bravery of your anklets, and your sashes, and your bracelets.

(*The women pass out. The mourners softly chant their dirge while they pass out, followed by all the company except SHELAH.*)

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Yahweh hath spoken: "I have nourished and

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity! They have forsaken thee, O Yahweh; they have despised thee, the Holy One of Israel. Therefore must thou destroy Judah.

(*While ISAIAH is speaking, SHELAH takes her place timidly behind him. She looks up into the heavens as he does, with an expression indicating sympathy with ISAIAH's words. When she hears him say that Yahweh will destroy Judah, she comes forward with passionate determination.*)

### SHELAH

No, Yahweh will never forsake Judah! Cannot justice flow as waters through the streets of Jerusalem? Cannot Yahweh make his city holy? (*ISAIAH looks at her thoughtfully.<sup>5</sup>*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### SCENE 2

(*Porch of the temple.*® **URIAH**, the priest, attending the fire on an altar of incense. **SAMUEL** and **OBADIAH**, entering, give the priest incense, prostrate themselves in Eastern fashion and pray as he burns it. **SHELAH**, entering, gives incense and prays standing. **REBECCA** and **RACHEL** also pray and, as they leave, **JONATHAN** enters. **ZILLAH** and **JUDITH** enter and with flippancy and irreverence give their incense to the priest, but instead of praying as he burns it they examine the embroidery of each other's dresses. **ISAIAH**, entering, watches them. They give a present to the priest and hurry out, looking mockingly at **ISAIAH**.)

### ISAIAH

How is the faithful city become a harlot! she that was full of judgment! righteousness lodged in her. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts (*looking at priest*), and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless,

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. (*Prostrates himself and prays as the priest goes into the temple.*) O Yahweh, Yahweh of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, wilt thou ease thee of thine adversaries and avenge thee of thine enemies? Must Jerusalem become as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water? (*Puts face to earth, then in attitude of prayer stretches out his hands toward temple. Silence.*)

### CHORUS OF SERAPHIM

(*From above or within temple.<sup>7</sup>*)

Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

(*As the first word is heard, ISAIAH partially rises, listens and looks intently into the temple. Incense issues from the temple, and a brilliant light, with the low rumble of thunder, while ISAIAH is transfigured by a vision of God, seen by him alone.*)

### ISAIAH

Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

(ISAIAH's attitude expresses  
agony of spirit.)

VOICE OF GOD

(*From within the temple*)

Lo, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged. (*ISAIAH looks toward the temple with joy.*) Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

ISAIAH

Here am I; send me.

VOICE OF GOD

Go, and tell this people, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not."

ISAIAH

(*Looking into the temple with passionate anxiety*)

How long, O Lord? How long?

VOICE OF GOD

Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land be utterly waste, and there be but a tenth in the midst of the land.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

Until the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem. In that day shall the branch of Yahweh be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem. Over the whole habitation of Mount Zion shall be spread as a canopy the glory of Yahweh.

### CHORUS

Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

(*ISAIAH gathers inspiration from the words of the CHORUS and walks out with determination, saying*)

### ISAIAH

Jerusalem must be holy!

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### SCENE 3

(*A market-place, with the bazaar<sup>8</sup> of a jewelry dealer with his wares hung in front. He sits on the floor pounding metal. Bazaar of a scarf maker with scarfs for the head hung out. Street musicians take places near bazaars and play. Various people pass along the street talking. Two men glance at the jewelry shop, then pass it by with contempt and begin making a bargain with the scarf dealer. Two women enter and one of them begins an animated bargain for a bracelet. The dealer holds up four fingers, the woman, one; she leaves scornfully. He runs after her, giving it to her for one. ISAIAH enters, dressed as a wandering bard, climbs on the platform between the bazaars and thrums the strings of a harp.<sup>9</sup> The people gather round expectantly.)*

### ISAIAH

A song will I sing of my friend,  
A love song touching his vineyard.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

A vineyard belongs to my friend,  
On a hill that is fruitful and sunny;  
He digged it, and cleared it of stones,  
And planted there vines that are choice;  
A tower he built in the midst,  
And hewed also therein a wine-vat;  
And he looked to find grapes that are good;  
Alas! it bore grapes that are wild.

Ye, in Jerusalem dwelling,  
And ye, who are freemen of Judah,  
Judge ye, I pray, between me  
And my cherished vineyard.  
What could have been done for my vineyard  
That I had not done?  
When I looked to find grapes that are good,  
Why bore it grapes that are wild?

And now let me give you to know  
What I purpose to do to my vineyard:  
I will take away its hedge,  
That it be eaten up,  
I will break through its walls,  
That it be trodden down;  
Yea, I will make it a waste,  
Neither pruned nor weeded.

It shall shoot up in thorns and briers,  
And the clouds will I enjoin that they rain  
not upon it.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

For the vineyard of Yahweh Sabaoth is the house of Israel,  
And the men of Judah his cherished plantation.  
And he looked for justice, but, behold, bloodshed;  
For righteousness, but, behold, an outcry.

*(The attitude of the crowd changes to hostility during the song, and becomes menacing during the following woes.)*

Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land! *(A portly land owner leaves with disgust.)* Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them!

## OBADIAH

Bah! Must you always drink water?

*(The WINE MERCHANT leaves.)*

## ISAIAH

Woe unto them that justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Woe unto them that

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

### SAMUEL

Did I not say these prophets are mad?

(*Leaves and beckons to others.*)

### ISAIAH

Therefore, as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have rejected the law of Yahweh of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

(*The crowd rushes out, showing signs of anger at ISAIAH. The bazaar keepers shut up shop with disgust. SHELAH alone remains sitting with bowed head on one of the bazaar steps. ISAIAH bows his head over his harp. The chant of the CHORUS is heard softly.*)

### CHORUS

(*In minor<sup>10</sup>*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.

### SHELAH

(*Coming forward, speaks to herself reflectively.*)

Hear they indeed, but understand not;  
See they indeed, but perceive not.

### ISAIAH

But thou dost understand; thou dost perceive. Help me make Jerusalem holy.

(*SHELAH puts her hand in his; together they listen to the CHORUS.*)

### CHORUS

(*In major*)

Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

(*Curtain or exit.*)

## ACT II—SCENE 1

---

(*Outside the wall of Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> Two women, RACHEL and REBECCA, drawing water from the spring of Shiloah. One woman dips up a jar of water and the other helps to put it on her head. A sudden clamor startles them as a young man, JOSHUA, rushes in.*)

**REBECCA**

What has happened? Is Jerusalem besieged?

**JOSHUA**

Rezin, king of Damascus, and Pekah, king of Israel, have come up to Jerusalem to make war against it.

**RACHEL**

Surely our King Ahaz will protect us.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### JOSHUA

They have said, "Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach in it, and remove King Ahaz and set up a king of our own, even the son of Tabeel."

(*Two councilors of the king enter, walking rapidly; SHEBNA, the treasurer, dressed as an Arab, and ELIAKIM, the steward.*)

### SHEBNA

(*To the women and JOSHUA*)

Go! The king comes to examine the spring of Shiloah. (*Another clamor of war as they go out.*)

### ELIAKIM

We are lost if our enemies capture our water. The king should be here now. (*Voices are heard.*) Ah! There he comes. (*Enter KING AHAZ with an attendant, ZECHARIAH.*)

### ZECHARIAH

(*Going before the king*)

Here is the place, in the highway of the fuller's field.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ELIAKIM

O king, the conduit (*they look into the spring where is the opening of an underground conduit*) is too small to supply the city. The waters of Shiloah trickle but gently into the upper pool. Cannot the conduit be enlarged?  
(*Another clamor of war.*)

### KING AHAZ

But our enemies are upon us. Can I procure enough men with picks to cut a tunnel in the night? (*Clamor of war.*) It is too late!

(*ISAIAH enters with his son, unnoticed.*)

### SHEBNA

(*Craftily*)

O king, there is only one hope. Send messengers to the king of Assyria saying, "I am thy servant and thy son; come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Damascus, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me."

### ELIAKIM

For that, it would be necessary to take all the silver and gold found in the house of Yah-

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

weh, and in the treasury of the king's house, and send it for a present to the king of Assyria! Surely we cannot rob the house of Yahweh!

### SHEBNA

Why not take Yahweh's money to save Yahweh's city?

### ISAIAH

Because thy heart is moved, and the heart of thy people, as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind, Yahweh hath said unto me, "Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and thy son"—O king, my son Shear Yashub—a remnant shall turn.

### KING

(*Starts, looking at boy, then at  
ISAIAH*)

Remnant?

### ISAIAH

Truly, a remnant—those who will not seek aid from Assyria but will trust in God.

### KING

(*Showes surprise at mention of  
Assyria, but, recovering himself,  
says*)

Assyria is mighty.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

(*Pleadingly*)

Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands. The fierce anger of Rezin and Pekah shall not hurt Jerusalem. Seek not aid from Assyria: trust Yahweh. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. (*Clamor of war.*)

### KING

Assyria's arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent; their horses' hoofs are like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind. (*Clamor of war.*) Their roaring is like a lion; Assyria is might; Israel is right; shall not Assyria's might protect Israel's right?

### ISAIAH

(*Shocked at the king's words,  
passionately*)

Ask thee a sign of Yahweh thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

### KING

I will not ask, neither will I tempt Yahweh.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

Hear now, O house of David; is it not enough for you to weary men, that ye must weary God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a young woman will conceive, and bear a son, and will call his name Immanuel. Curds and honey shall he eat, when he knows how to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land of whose two kings thou art sore afraid will be unpeopled, and Judah prosperous. But in the days that are to come, if thou callest Assyria, they will come, all of them, and settle like bees in the valley of Judah.

*(The king walks out haughtily, followed by councilors. ISAIAH shows distress that he has failed to win the king.) (Clamor of war.)*

### ISAIAH

Behold, darkness and distress must come, and the gloom of anguish. Men will pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry. They will curse by their king. *(Looks where AHAZ has walked out. Going over to where his son has been playing with sticks and stones, building a house, ISAIAH takes the boy's face in his hands and looks searchingly into his eyes. As he looks, his gloom turns to hope and joy.)*

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

But in days to come, after Judah is purified, then the people that walk in darkness shall see a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them shall the light shine. For every boot of the warrior whose tread resounds, and every war-cloak drenched with blood, will be burned up, will be fuel for fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wondrous-Counselor, God of a Hero, Prince of Peace, Everlasting Father. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.

*(While ISAIAH has been speaking, his wife, SHELAH, has appeared, looking anxiously for her son, who now runs over to her. She sends him to bring his father. Clasping the hand of the boy and of SHELAH, ISAIAH leaves.)*

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### SCENE 2

*(Enter two farmers who are bringing in vegetables for their bazaars.)*

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### FIRST FARMER

Today they may attack the temple wall from the north.

### SECOND FARMER

(*As if imparting a secret*)

No, rich presents of King Ahaz, taken from our temple and sent to Assyria, have won their help.

### FIRST FARMER

Oh, we do not want help from Assyria. Assyria is heathen.

### SECOND FARMER

Oh, but Assyria is great. Assyria can fight.

(*Farmers spread out their vegetables on floor and front of bazaars. Enter ISAIAH with URIAH, the priest, and ZECHARIAH, the king's attendant. ISAIAH carries a great tablet which he sets up against the side of the bazaar, then turns to his two attendants.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

I have brought you here as faithful witnesses. Know, O men, that today the prophetess hath borne a son. And Yahweh said unto me, "Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz (haste the booty—speed the prey), for before the child shall have knowledge to cry, 'My father,' and 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria."

### SECOND FARMER

Yes, Assyria will save us; King Ahaz has sent to Assyria.

### CROWD

Assyria; King Ahaz!

(*Others come in to market, among them a group of young men who watch ISAIAH as he writes in Hebrew upon the tablet, pronouncing and translating:*

מַהְרָה—*Maher*—haste  
שָׁלָל—*Shalal*—the booty  
חַשְׁבָּא—*Hash*—speed  
בָּז—*Baz*—the prey

ISAIAH suddenly turns round upon those who are watching him write and speaks rapidly and passionately.)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

O my people dwelling in Zion, you are afraid of armies, but you do not fear Yahweh. Justice you do not regard. Therefore, Yahweh must stretch out his hand against you and make you the booty of Assyria. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers that write perverseness; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right of the poor of my people, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey! And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory? Ye shall only bow down as prisoners, and shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

*(Two young men, DAVID and SAMUEL, come forward.)*

### DAVID

O Isaiah, we would be of the holy remnant who regard not the might of Assyria but trust in Yahweh.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

ISAIAH

(*Putting his hand in DAVID's, with surprise and joy*)

Even so said Yahweh to me, "A remnant shall turn to righteousness."

SAMUEL

May the holy remnant trust in the Holy One of Israel in truth.

(*Another young man, JONATHAN, almost decides to join ISAIAH, but turns away.*)

JONATHAN'S MOTHER

O my son, hearken to the words of the prophet.

ISAIAH

(*Putting his arms around the two young men*)

Come, let us walk in the light of Yahweh.

(*They walk to one side and talk. The people gather around a magician performing tricks. The street musicians sing and play. JOASH, a messenger, runs in, shouting excitedly.<sup>12</sup>*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### JOASH

The armies of Rezin and Pekah are withdrawn. Assyria has come up against Damascus and taken it.

### CROWD

Our enemies gone! Damascus fallen!  
Where is Rezin? What of the people?

### JOASH

Rezin is slain. The people are carried captive. Moreover, some of the cities of Israel are taken. Will they not come also against the daughter of Zion? Surely they will not spare the hill of Jerusalem! We must prepare to meet Assyria.

### JONATHAN

(*Speaks with indignation.*)

Is it for this that our king has taken the silver and gold from the house of Yahweh and sent it to Assyria? Is it for this that Ahaz polluted our temple with the altar after the Damascus pattern, and introduced Assyria's gods? Why become evil to ward off evil, and thus invite greater evil? We have but exchanged a weak enemy for a strong one. (*Put-*

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

*ting his hand in the hand of ISAIAH)* Henceforth I will trust Yahweh, who loves righteousness.

### ISAIAH

Out of the holy remnant shall come a purified Jerusalem, dedicated to the righteousness of Yahweh.

(JONATHAN joins the other two disciples, and ISAIAH speaks to the people, who are slinking out in depressed attitudes.)

### ISAIAH

Yahweh spoke unto me, saying:

"Forasmuch as this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly, now therefore Yahweh bringeth upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks; and he shall sweep onward into Judah; he shall overflow and pass through; he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of the land." For God is with us—in punishment! (ISAIAH turns to his disciples, as all the people have passed out.) Let us bind up the testimony. (*They walk to the steps of a bazaar. As they go, ISAIAH says*) Because the king of Judah

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

hath rejected the word of Yahweh, and the people of Judah have refused to turn to him, I will wait for Yahweh, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

(*Sitting on the steps with a disciple at his feet, he continues*) I will seal the law among my disciples. Let us write it down and on a scroll inscribe it, that it may serve in days to come. (*Begins to dictate to disciples, who write on scroll.*)

Yahweh hath sent a word unto Jacob,  
And it hath lighted upon Israel.

## ACT III—SCENE 1

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*(Street scene: two women come from opposite directions and meet with surprise.)*

JUDITH

Salaam, Zillah, it is many years since last we met. Dost thou remember that feast at the temple when Isaiah came and denounced us for our finery?

ZILLAH

Surely, I will never forget those days of gaiety. Alas! since then I have sold every bracelet for bread.

JUDITH

Hast thou seen Isaiah? He is walking about the streets of Jerusalem, naked and barefoot, clad only in the undergarment of a captive of war.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

ZILLAH

(*Gladly*)

Then misfortune has come to him too! Dost thou remember that he said that Yahweh would take away the bravery of our anklets and bracelets? Perhaps he is punished for this!

JUDITH

No, misfortune has not come to Isaiah. He says he is a sign to those who trust in Egypt.

(*Enter OBADIAH and URIAH.*)

URIAH

Philistine ambassadors are here to ask the king to join an alliance with Egypt. But he will not receive them. The young king ought not to listen to Isaiah.

OBADIAH

No, Isaiah ought not to be allowed to go about as a sign. The elders should instruct the new king.

(*Enter ISAIAH, barefoot, dressed in his white undergarment. He is followed by a jeering crowd.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

ISAIAH

(*Suddenly stopping the crowd*)

Damascus is fallen; Israel is taken captive. Even so shall Yahweh lead away the captive of Egypt. And the inhabitants of the coast-land shall say, "Behold the land from which you expected help! And we, how shall we escape?"

OBADIAH

But what can we do if we will not join with Egypt?

ISAIAH

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. What mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor?

URIAH

But why callest thou Judah unclean and wicked? See how faithfully they come to the feasts and bring sacrifices.

ISAIAH

Thus saith Yahweh: "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

Your new moons and your appointed feasts  
my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me;  
I am weary of bearing them. When ye spread  
forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from  
you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will  
not hear; your hands are full of blood."

JOASH

(*Running*)

The king comes! Our new king, Hezekiah!

(*There is a murmur of excitement in the crowd. OBADIAH thrusts them back, putting ISAIAH behind the others. Enter HEZEKIAH under a canopy upheld by two attendants.*)

HEZEKIAH

(*Stopping his retinue*)

Why this tumult?

OBADIAH

Isaiah, O king, puts us to shame before the  
Philistine ambassadors.

HEZEKIAH

Come forth, Isaiah. (*The crowd release him.*) Why this captive's garb?

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

As a sign to Judah, O king, should she join hands with Egypt and Philistia.

What will the king of my people answer if messengers of the Philistines should speak to him?

### HEZEKIAH

That there shall be no conspiracy with Egypt and Philistia.

That Yahweh hath founded Zion, and there the afflicted of his people find refuge.

### ISAIAH

Wilt thou always trust in Yahweh? Then will Judah prosper.

*(The king invites ISAIAH under his canopy. They pass out, and the people follow with astonishment and curiosity.)*

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### SCENE 2

<sup>13</sup> (KING HEZEKIAH seated on his throne; near by, SHEBNA, the treasurer, and JOAH, the re-

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

*corder; musician at foot of throne plays. MESSENGER, entering, gives letter to HEZEKIAH, who reads with excitement.)*

### HEZEKIAH

Shebna, call the council. (*SHEBNA goes and leads in the council, with ISAIAH; they sit in a circle.*) You know, O rulers and princes of Judah, that our brother Israel is fallen and Assyria presses on toward Judah. We must prepare to meet Sennacherib of Assyria. I have cut a conduit in the solid rock, bringing the water into the pool of Siloam. What more shall we do to save Judah?

### SHEBNA

(*Horn is heard.*)

Help is at our doors. An ambassador from Egypt beseeches the king for entrance.

### ISAIAH

Woe unto those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horsemen because they are strong, but look not to Israel's Holy One, nor consult Yahweh.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### JOAH

Must we not, O king, receive this ambassador from Egypt, lest the Egyptians also become our enemies? (*HEZEKIAH signifies assent and signs for JOAH to bring in ambassador.*)

### ISAIAH

The Egyptians are men, and not God; their horses are flesh, and not spirit: when Yahweh shall stretch forth his hand, both the helper and the helped shall fall.

(*An ambassador from Egypt enters with blare of trumpets, kneels and offers a present and a paper to HEZEKIAH, who reads and hands it to SHEBNA.*)

### SHEBNA

O king, let us flee to the shelter of Pharaoh; let us seek protection in Egypt; Pharaoh is our brother and friend.

### ISAIAH

(*To HEZEKIAH*)

The shelter will turn to your shame, and the refuge to your confusion.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

(To SHEBNA)

What right hast thou here? (*Seizing the paper which he is holding toward HEZEKIAH*)  
What kin hast thou here, that thou hewest out  
a sepulcher for thyself in the rock on high?  
Behold, Yahweh will hurl thee, will hurl thee  
away, O mighty man; he will roll thee, will  
roll thee together and toss thee like a ball into  
a wide-stretching land. Thither shalt thou go  
to die, and thither will go thy splendid chariots,  
thou disgrace to the house of thy lord.  
(*Throws paper on floor.*)

SHEBNA

(Picking up paper)

O king, heed not the vain words of a  
prophet. (*Hands the paper to HEZEKIAH,  
who, taking it, bows his head upon his hands.*)

ISAIAH

(To the EGYPTIAN)

Ah, land of the shrill buzzing of insects'  
wings! Depart, O fleet messenger, to a na-  
tion tall and of polished skin, for before the  
harvest, when the blossom is over, Yahweh will  
lop your branches with pruning knives.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### MESSENGER FROM EKRON

(*Leading a prisoner*)

Know, O king, that Sennacherib has come as far as Sidon, whose king he has removed and whose people he has tortured; therefore the people of Ekron have joined with Egypt against Assyria. But their king, Padi, is a traitor (*pushing his prisoner contemptuously*), he will not plan with Egypt. The people of Ekron, therefore, ask thee to keep him in chains.

### SHEBNA

See, O king, what has befallen a king who would not join with Egypt.

### HEZEKIAH

(*Rising, finally makes his decision, signs the paper and gives it to SHEBNA, who hands it to the EGYPTIAN, who leaves.*)

Eliakim, prepare the gifts for Pharaoh. (*ELIAKIM goes out.*) Shebna, conduct Padi to prison. (*SHEBNA starts, but stops and listens to ISAIAH.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### ISAIAH

“Woe to the unruly sons!” says Yahweh,  
“Carrying out a purpose which is not mine,  
And concluding a treaty contrary to my Spirit,  
    thus adding sin to sin;  
Who set forth on the way to Egypt  
Without asking my counsel!  
Because ye reject my word and trust in wile  
    and policy,  
Therefore, this guilty act shall be to you like  
    a bulge in a wall ready to fall.”

(*To HEZEKIAH*)

By turning and remaining quiet ye would  
have been delivered. In quietness and con-  
fidence would have been your strength.

(*SHEBNA and other councilors  
confer with HEZEKIAH about  
ISAIAH. The king motions for  
SHEBNA to take him. SHEBNA sig-  
nals soldiers to take ISAIAH, who  
breaks away from them.*)

### ISAIAH

(*With rapture, while HEZEKIAH  
listens incredulously*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

Yet will Yahweh protect the city of David.  
Ho Ariel, Ariel, the city where David encamped!  
The multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel  
Shall be as when an hungry man dreameth;  
Behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty;  
Or as when a thirsty man dreameth;  
Behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint.  
So shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

(*SHEBNA motions to the two soldiers to take him away. HEZEKIAH shows regret for his decision, starts after ISAIAH as if he would still save him, then bows his head in despair as the prison door slams.*)

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### SCENE 3

(*Room in palace; HEZEKIAH on couch; light low; ABNER, a watcher at foot of bed. Knocking on the door: attendant admits a MESSENGER from Ekron, but does not enter.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### MESSENGER FROM EKRON

Ekron is fallen; the governors and princes are killed and their corpses are bound on poles round the city. It is not far, O king, from Ekron to Jerusalem.

### HEZEKIAH

(*Half rising*)

But Egypt! Will not Pharaoh's army stop them? Egypt promised to protect Judah.

### ABNER

(*Returning*)

O king, messengers have arrived saying Egypt is defeated. On the north of Ekron they took their stand to hold Assyria back from Jerusalem, but their horsemen overrode them and Egypt fled.

### HEZEKIAH

A broken staff is Pharaoh of Egypt to all who lean upon him.

### SHEBNA

(*Entering in haste*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

Fear not. We can win the friendship of Sennacherib,—friendship is easily bought. Here is a letter I have prepared for thee to send him. (*Reads.*) “Hezekiah, king of Judah, to Sennacherib, king of Assyria, at Lachish: I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear: I send thee three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold, and pray thee to turn back from Judah. I am thy servant and thy son.”

### HEZEKIAH

(*Despairingly, to ABNER*)

Send for Eliakim. (*Exit ABNER. To SHEBNA*) O thou crafty treasurer who thinkest to buy priceless treasures with money! Thou hast degraded the house of Judah. First, thou didst persuade my father, King Ahaz, to buy the friendship of Assyria; then thou didst draw me into a compact with Egypt. Now I am but thy slave, and Judah is betrayed. (*He angrily signs the letter presented by SHEBNA.*)

### ELIAKIM

(*Entering*)

What is thy command, O king?

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### HEZEKIAH

(*To ELIAKIM*)

Cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of Yahweh, and from the overlaid pillars, and send it to the king of Assyria. (*Exit ELIAKIM.*)

### SHEBNA

(*To HEZEKIAH, who has thrown himself down in despair.*)

Fear not, O king, for armies and money win all things.

(*ABNER rushes in with terror in his eyes and a letter in his hand. saying*)

### ABNER

Messengers from Sennacherib bring this letter.

(*SHEBNA takes letter as it is being handed to HEZEKIAH.*)

### HEZEKIAH

Is not the letter to the king of Judah? (*Puts out his hand for it, and SHEBNA reluctantly hands it over. HEZEKIAH reads.*) "Sennacherib of Assyria, to Hezekiah of Judah: I have heard that thou art overcome by the brightness of my appearance. Sur-

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

render, then, the city of Jerusalem, that it be not destroyed. Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, ‘Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ Behold, thou hast heard what the king of Assyria did to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?”

(HEZEKIAH, overcome, falls on his knees, holding out the letter as if for Yahweh to see.)

Of a truth, O Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all lands, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. But thou, O Yahweh, art the God of all kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Save us, therefore, from his hand. (Rises suddenly as if with a new idea. To ABNER) Send for Isaiah. Say to him, “This is a day of trouble and rebuke; lift up thy prayer, that Yahweh save Judah.” (ABNER departs; HEZEKIAH falls on the couch, turning his face to the wall; ABNER enters with ISAIAH bound and leaves him alone with the king.)

### ISAIAH

(Without approaching HEZEKIAH)

Thus saith Yahweh, “Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.” (HEZEKIAH does not turn his face toward ISAIAH, but writhes in agony as ISAIAH continues.)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

Your country is desolate; your cities are  
burned with fire;  
The daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a  
vineyard,  
Like a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.  
Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt  
more and more?  
The whole head is sick, and the whole heart  
faint.

### HEZEKIAH

*(Rising and holding out his arms  
toward ISAIAH)*

Ah, I have sinned against Yahweh, and  
against his prophet, and against his people.

### ISAIAH

*(Looking at him long and  
searchingly)*

Thus saith Yahweh: "I will deliver thee and  
this city out of the hand of the king of As-  
syria, and I will defend this city."

### ABNER

*(Running in excitedly)*

Rabshakeh, the captain of Sennacherib's  
army, is standing in the highway of the fuller's  
field, by the conduit, and demands to speak  
with the king upon the wall.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### SHEBNA

(*Who has been restlessly walking about*)

Send me, O king, let me treat with Sennacherib's general.

### HEZEKIAH

(*Looking him in the eyes*)

Thy policy and wile it is that has humiliated Judah—thy scorn of faith and justice, thy trust in power and armies. (*To ABNER*) Set Isaiah free. (*Signifies that SHEBNA is to be taken away by ABNER. ABNER expresses personal dislike of SHEBNA, motioning to the soldiers to bind him and take him to prison. He then brings the robe and the crown of the king to prepare him to go out upon the wall. While HEZEKIAH is being robed, ISAIAH speaks.*)

### ISAIAH

Ho Assyria, the rod of mine anger,  
The staff of mine indignation!  
Who thinketh in his heart,  
“I am strong and prudent;  
On the riches of the peoples  
My hand has seized as on a nest;  
As unguarded eggs are carried away,  
Have I carried off the earth;

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

There was none that fluttered the wing,  
Or opened the beak, or chirped."  
Behold, Yahweh will break in pieces the rod  
of Assyria;

He will put a spirit of fear within him, and  
he shall return to his own land, and the rem-  
nant that is escaped of the house of Judah  
shall trust in the justice of Yahweh.

(HEZEKIAH takes ISAIAH by the  
*arm and they walk away.*)

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### SCENE 3

(*Wall of Jerusalem; <sup>14</sup> ELIAKIM  
and JOAH on one side and ISAIAH  
on the other, with his disciples.  
The crowd surround them.*)

### RABSHAKEH

(*Shouts first in Hebrew*)

O ho! Hezekiah, king of Judah,—a mes-  
senger from Sennacherib, king of Assyria.

(*A citizen runs out and peers  
over the wall; then, as he reports,  
a shout is heard as the king and  
people come.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### RABSHAKEH

(*In English, then in Hebrew*)

Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, "What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thinkest thou that a mere word of the lips is counsel and strength for war?" How canst thou repel the onset of the least servants of my lord?

### ELIAKIM

Speak, we pray, to thy servants in Aramaic; we understand it; but speak not to us in Hebrew in the presence of the people who are on the wall.

### RABSHAKEH

Is it to you only that my lord hath sent me to speak these words? Is it not to them who are upon the wall, and who will be driven to eat and drink filthy food with you? (*Repeat in Hebrew.*)

### HEZEKIAH

(*Motioning to the people to stop their murmuring*)

Answer him not.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### RABSHAKEH

Hear ye the words of the great king of Assyria: "Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he is unable to rescue you: and let not Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh, saying, 'Yahweh will surely rescue us.'" Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, "Make friendship with me, and come out to me; and ye shall eat every one of his own vine and fig-tree." Thus saith Sennacherib, "Hezekiah will I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem!"

### HEZEKIAH

Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? Against whom hast thou lifted up thy voice? Even against the Holy One of Israel. Dost thou think to overcome Yahweh by the multitude of thy chariots?

### ISAIAH

Thus saith Yahweh concerning Assyria, "He shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow into it, Nor come before it with a shield, Nor cast up a mound against it. I will guard this city, that I may rescue it." Go say this to your great king of Assyria.

(RABSHAKEH *departs.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

CROWD

(*With attitudes of fear*)

Will they return? Will Sennacherib come?  
What shall we do?

JOAH

Of what use is faith? Let us eat and drink,  
for tomorrow we die.

ISAIAH

What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly  
gone  
Up to the housetops?  
O thou that art full of shoutings, tumultuous  
city!  
Thus are they who trust in horses and chariots;  
The work of righteousness shall bring quiet.

JOAH

But hath not Rabshakeh said that Senna-  
cherib is coming with his army? What is trust  
and righteousness against an army?

ISAIAH

The effect of righteousness is peace and con-  
fidence forever.  
“Come now, and let us reason together,” saith  
Yahweh;

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

"Though your sins be as scarlet,  
They shall be as white as snow;  
Though they be red like crimson,  
They shall be as wool."  
O my people, that dwellest in Zion,  
Turn to Yahweh, join his holy remnant.  
Like a mother bird fluttering about her nest,  
So will Yahweh protect Jerusalem,  
Sheltering and delivering, sparing and res-  
cuing her.

### JOSHUA, A MESSENGER

(*In terror-stricken tones*)

The angel of Yahweh has gone forth, and  
has slain in the camp of the Assyrians a hun-  
dred and fourscore and five thousand.

(*The people bow in awe and ter-  
ror.*)

### HEZEKIAH

This is the terror of Yahweh, and the glory  
of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake  
mightily the earth.

### JOASH, ANOTHER MESSENGER

(*Not knowing that the news has  
been given*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

Sennacherib's army is gone. An Egyptian said that the field-mice gnawed their bow-strings; another said that a rumor of war at home called them. (*Looks surprised at the attitude of the people.*)

### HEZEKIAH

(*To the messenger*)

Yahweh hath delivered us from the mighty man and the man of war.

### SHELAH

How still is the despot become, how quiet the raging!  
Broken has Yahweh the staff of the wicked,  
the rod of the tyrant,  
That smote peoples in passion, with stroke unremitting,  
Which trampled the nations in anger, unchecked was his trampling.  
Now the whole earth is at rest, they break forth into singing.  
Yea, the fir-trees rejoice, and Lebanon's cedars.

(*People gradually rise and listen to her.*)

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

Rise up, ye daughters of Zion;  
Hearken, ye men of Judah;  
Let us cleanse now the thoughts of our hearts,  
And make just the deeds of our hands.  
Until the Spirit be poured from on high,  
And Jerusalem in truth be holy;  
Until the wilderness become a fruitful field,  
And the barren field a forest.

### ISAIAH

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light  
of Yahweh.  
Let each one cast away his idols of silver and  
his idols of gold to the moles and to the  
bats.  
Let the rich keep no more the spoil of the poor  
in his house, nor grind the face of the poor  
in the market. Come.

*(ISAIAH leads the way toward  
the temple, the crowd following;  
noise of the breaking of altars and  
idols in the temple is heard. HEZE-  
KIAH returns, bringing a brass ser-  
pent.)*

### HEZEKIAH

*(Breaking serpent)*

Nehushtan, no one shall again burn incense  
to nothingness. All shall trust in Yahweh. (**To**

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

ELIAKIM) Go, cut down the sacred pillars in Judah. Remove the high places and cut down the Asherah.

(*ISAIAH, taking the spears and swords of the soldiers, hurls them to the ground.*)

(*The CHORUS is heard singing.  
All kneel and lift hands in attitude  
of prayer.*)

### CHORUS

Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts:  
The whole earth is full of his glory.

(*All join in softly, looking up.*)

### ISAIAH

Days shall come when Yahweh shall judge between the nations,  
And give decision to many peoples;  
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
And their spears into pruning-hooks;  
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
Neither shall they learn war any more.  
Then the poor will be judged with justice,  
And the meek reproved with equity.  
Righteousness shall girdle the earth,  
And faithfulness.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

(*The king rises, and, gradually,  
the people.<sup>15</sup>*)

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
And the leopard lie down with the kid;  
The calf and the lion shall graze together;  
And a little child shall lead them.

There shall none hurt nor destroy in all my  
holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of  
the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover  
the sea.

### FULL CHORUS OF ALL

Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts:  
The whole earth is full of his glory.

## NOTES

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### NOTE 1

The author desires that the drama shall be given wherever there are groups interested in presenting the literature of the Old Testament, but hopes that plans will be made to present it adequately. It is evident that the part of Isaiah the Prophet must be taken by some one with spiritual understanding and power.

This is a drama which may well enlist the cooperation of those of all ages in a group. The older and more experienced should take the parts of prophet, kings, and councilors, while the younger may make up the Jerusalem crowd.

The right to produce this drama is granted only on condition that at least ten copies be purchased for that purpose.

Arrangements may be made with the author of the drama for assistance in its production.

The play is printed in form for production in a fully equipped theater; it has, however,

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

been given successfully out of doors and in churches where there were no curtains, and little opportunity for change of scene. Slight changes in the text and arrangements are necessary under these conditions. They will be indicated in the notes throughout.

Modern Palestinian costumes are preferable, because they are more like ancient garments than anything else obtainable. But costumes may be made by copying the general lines and colors of the costumes of Orientals, especially Syrians. Isaiah's prophetic robe may be modeled on the Sargent picture.

The "Synopsis of the Play" is recommended for use on programs.

### NOTE 2

The temple may be represented by any doorway out of which light and music may come, or a scene may be painted representing the pillars of Joachim and Boaz. An altar of incense may stand in the doorway. See Stade's reconstruction of Solomon's temple in *Geschichte Israels*, pp. 325-329.

### NOTE 3

Omit if there are no musicians. A mandolin may be used to play the tune of "Anitata," page viii.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### *Description of the Syrian "Debke" Dance*

*First Movement:* Form a circle, lock fingers and elbows; step to the right with the left foot, put right foot back of left; repeat; stamp left foot forward, stamp left foot side, double knee bend, straighten.

*Second Movement:* Left forward bent-knee step, right back bent-knee step; repeat; left foot forward stretch, left foot sidewise stretch, left bent-knee step, stamp right.

Break circle, first for girl, then for boy to dance alone in center, swinging hands from side to side above head.

#### NOTE 4

See Mourning Song on page ix.

#### NOTE 5

When there is no curtain, let Shelah say: "Come, it is the hour of prayer." This and the following scene may be blended by having the priest enter at once, followed by the group who pray. Lights should be lowered.

#### NOTE 6

While Isaiah prays, the stage should be dark until illuminated by a shaft of light from the temple.

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

### NOTE 7

See Celestial Chorus, page viii. This chorus should be sung by soprano voices accompanied by violin. The music should seem to come either from above or from within the temple.

### NOTE 8

The bazaars may be constructed of rough lumber on a platform about two feet high and twelve feet long. The bazaars are five feet wide by seven feet high. Place them at each end of the platform, leaving two feet between. If bazaars are not possible, peddlers may sell the articles mentioned.

### NOTE 9

For picture of ancient Jewish harp, see Jewish encyclopedia, article on "Harp and Lyre"; also Encyc. Bib., article on "Music," p. 3238.

### NOTE 10

See Celestial Chorus in minor, page ix.

### NOTE 11

The spring may be represented by circular frame covered with painted cloth.

Two or three palm-trees are desirable. When the play is given out of doors, natural

## THE DRAMA OF ISAIAH

rocks may be substituted and made to look more like the Jerusalem spring.

### NOTE 12

Let a man perform a trick with elaborate motions after the manner of the Eastern fakirs. In the midst of the laughter and music the messenger enters.

### NOTE 13

In this scene the wily policy of Shebna reaches its climax. Let it be evident that he would kill Isaiah if he dared. King Hezekiah is torn between desire to follow Isaiah and fear of Shebna.

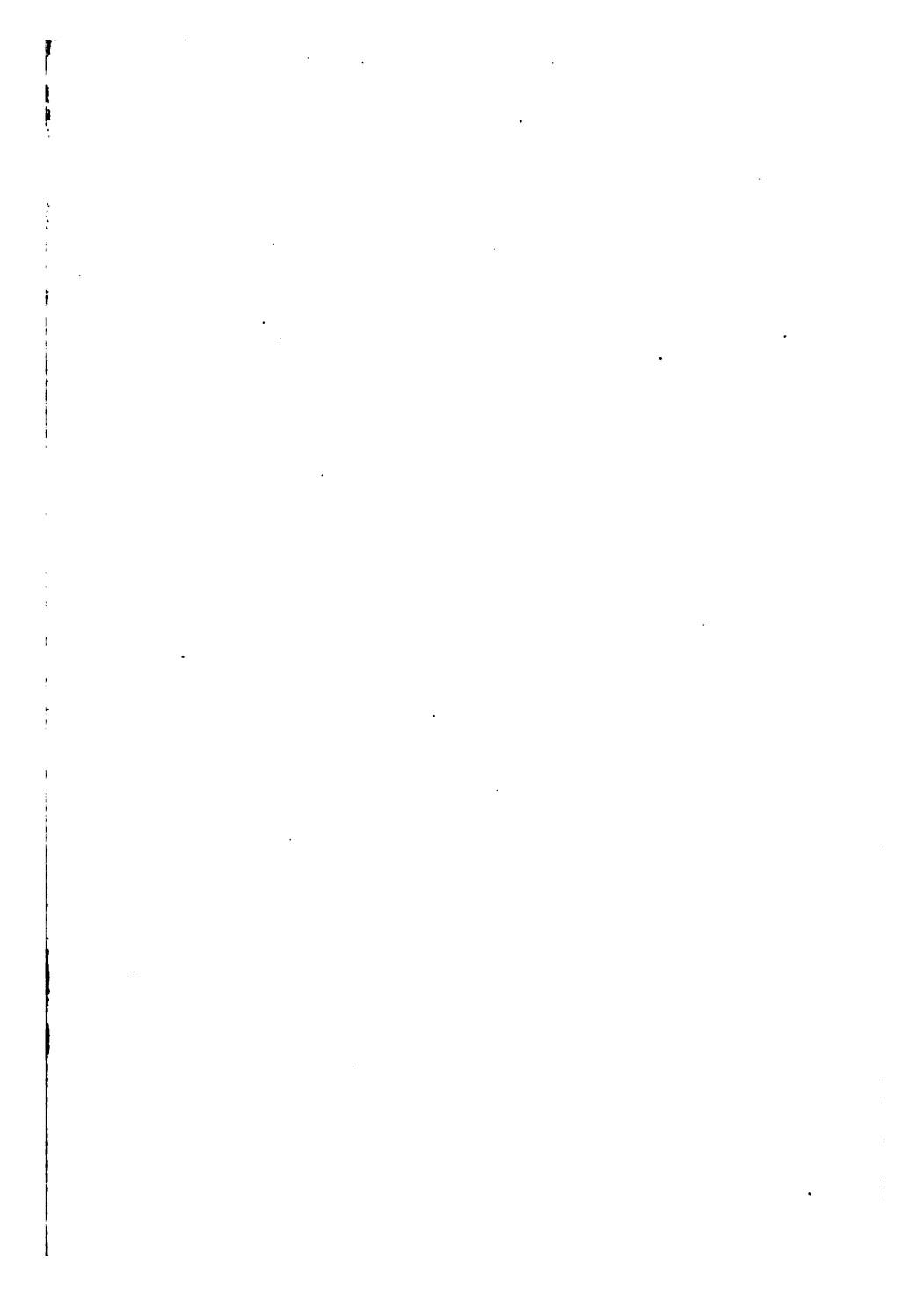
### NOTE 14

Let Rabshakeh enter through the audience, shouting as he comes down the aisle. The edge of the platform is taken to be the wall of Jerusalem. Both Rabshakeh and the crowd on the wall should produce the illusion of greater distance by their voices. An attendant may speak Hebrew if Rabshakeh himself cannot.

### NOTE 15

A little boy may draw near to Isaiah as he speaks of the animals and may touch his hand just before he speaks of "a little child."

The Closing Chorus should be triumphant.





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